

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04

TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 IO-10 XMB-02

AGR-05 /103 W

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R 302201Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1535

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 08178

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EGEN, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: COMMON MARKET BASKETS: FOOD FOR THOUGHT

REF: LONDON 8134

SUMMARY: BOTH PROS AND ANTIS HAVE MADE DETERMINED
EFFORT TO LIVEN UP THEIR RESPECTIVE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGNS
MOST RECENTLY BY ATTEMPTING TO GARNER SUPPORT FROM
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BRITISH HOUSEWIVES OVER RELATIONSHIP OF FOOD AND CLOTHING

PRICES TO COMMON MARKET MEMBERSHIP. ANTIS SENT MIXED TEAM TO DO MARKET SHOPPING IN BRUSSELS WHILE PROS SENT ATTRACTIVE YOUNG BLOND TO OSLO AS A COUNTERATTRACTION. MEDIA HAVING FIELD DAY TRYING TO GET BARBARA CASTLE INTO SLUG FEST WITH SHIRLEY WILLIAMS. END SUMMARY

1. IN EFFORT TO ENLIVEN CAMPAIGN RHETORIC WHICH HAS NOT TOUCHED OFF MANY SPARKS WITH ELECTORATE, BOTH CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSED MAY 29 IN THEIR PRESS CONFERENCES ON MARKET BASKET SHOPPING COMPARISONS. THRUST OF ARGUMENT OF THE PROS IS SIMPLY THAT MEMBERSHIP IN MARKET IS KEEPING DOWN FOOD PRICES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THAT WITHDRAWAL FROM COMMON MARKET WILL PRODUCE IMMEDIATE INCREASE OF PRICES. POSITION OF THE ANTIS ON THIS QUESTION IS THAT MEMBERSHIP IN COMMON MARKET HAS ALREADY INCREASED COSTS OF FOOD AND ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES FOR BRITISH CONSUMERS AND THAT WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MARKET WILL PRODUCE IMMEDIATE DROP IN THESE PRICES.

2. ANTIS WHO WENT SHOPPING WERE BARBARA CASTLE, MRS. NEIL MARTEN (CONSERVATIVE) AND BARBARA CASTLE'S NIECE. THEIR COMPARATIVE SHOPPING INVOLVED VISITS TO MARKS & SPENCER OUTLETS IN UK AND IN RECENTLY OPENED BRUSSELS SHOP. FOOD PURCHASES MADE IN BRITISH SUPERMARKETS AND NEAREST COMPARABLE BRUSSELS OUTLET. /WHILE ANTIS BENEFITED FROM POLISHED WAY MRS. CASTLE PRESENTED RESULTS OF HER INVESTIGATIONS AND PURCHASES, SHE WAS CRITICIZED FOR SUBJECTING HER YOUNG NIECE TO FLOODLIGHTS AND CAMERAS, PARTICULARLY SINCE HER ARGUMENT WAS BASED ON SOMEWHAT SPECIOUS STATISTICS.

3. THE PROS, PERHAPS WITH ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF MRS. CASTLE'S TRAVELS, DECIDED ON A DIFFERENT COURSE AND SENT ATTRACTIVE YOUNG BLOND, DESCRIBED GENEROUSLY AS "PRACTICING HOUSEWIFE" TO OSLO. WHILE UNDOUBTEDLY SHE WAS MORE PHOTOGENIC THAN MRS. CASTLE, HER ARGUMENT WASN'T ANY MORE CONVINCING, SINCE COMPARISON OF PRICES FOR GROCERIES FOR ENGLISH HOUSEWIVES OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T RELATE DIRECTLY TO NORWEGIAN EXAMPLE.

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4. OF MUCH MORE INTEREST TO REPORTERS THAN PRICES IS THE SLANGING GOING ON BETWEEN JENKINS AND BENN AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A SIMILAR MATCH BETWEEN WILLIAMS AND CASTLE. MRS. WILLIAMS ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO MADE MENTION OF THE FACT THAT FOOD PRICES IN BRITAIN WOULD RISE IMMEDIATELY AND DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF A NEGATIVE REFERENDUM VOTE. MRS. CASTLE DENIED THAT CHARGE, EVEN THOUGH HER STATISTICS GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED THAT THE

BRITISH HOUSEWIFE IS BETTER OFF ON ABSOLUTE TERMS THAN
HER BELGIAN COUNTERPART.

5. JACK JONES DREW A DISTINCTION EARLIER BETWEEN
COMMONWEALTH POLITICIANS AND GOVERNMENT AND COMMONWEALTH
CITIZENS. REFERRING TO A RECENT VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND,
JONES SAID 95 PERCENT OF NEW ZEALANDERS WANTED BRITAIN TO
LEAVE THE MARKET AND THEIR VIEWS WERE BEING DELIBERATELY
IGNORED BY THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT. MRS. CASTLE AND
HER ENTOURAGE PICKED UP THE STORY AND QUOTED A POLL TAKEN
OF 500 NEW ZEALANDERS, OF WHOM A LARGE PERCENTAGE (BUT
NOT 95 PERCENT) EXPRESSED THE HOPE BRITAIN WOULD RETURN
TO TRADITIONAL COMMONWEALTH AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND
LEAVE THE COMMON MARKET.

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6. SCHEDULED ON THE DOCKET MAY 29 WAS A LONG-AWAITED APPEARANCE BY ENOCH POWELL. HIS NON-APPEARANCE WAS EXPLAINED AS A DECISION MUTUALLY AGREED BY POWELL HIMSELF, MRS. CASTLE AND THE ANTI EC CHAIRMAN, NEIL MARTEN, THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR HIM TO APPEAR SEPARATELY IN ORDER TO ALLOW MRS. CASTLE MORE TIME TO DISCUSS HER MARKETING TRIP. POWELL REMAINS COMMITTED, HOWEVER, TO A LATER PRESS CONFERENCE APPEARANCE, AND MRS. CASTLE WAS EAGER
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TO POINT OUT SHE HAD NO OBJECTION TO APPEARING ON THE SAME PROGRAM WITH HIM.

7. BOTH PROS AND ANTIS HAVE CONTINUED TO EMPHASIZE THE ALL-PARTY NATURE OF THEIR PRESS CONFERENCES AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS. LIBERALS HAVE BEEN QUITE ACTIVE IN PUSHING THE PRO-EEC POSITION, THOUGH LADY SEAR, WHO GAVE A VERY COMMON SENSE VIEW OF SOME OF THE ECONOMIC INTRICACIES OF THE REFERENDUM, IS NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT OF THE OUTCOME. SHE FEARS A LOW TURNOUT, WHICH PUBLIC OPINION POLLS WILL ENCOURAGE. SHE ALSO NOTED THAT ANTI-VOTERS FEEL A STRONGER OBLIGATION TO VOTE TO RECORD THEIR OPPOSITION TO MEMBERSHIP THAN DO THE PRO-VOTERS.

8. SOME LABOR SPOKESMEN ALSO EXPECT A VERY MODEST ELECTORATE PARTICIPATION. BOB MELLISH TOLD A REPORTER THAT TOTAL VOTER PARTICIPATION IN HIS LONDON CONSTITUENCY MAY NOT BE HIGHER THAN 30 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE.

9. THE CONSERVATIVES ARE CONCERNED BUT HOPEFUL THAT TRADITIONAL CONSERVATIVE MACHINE FOR GETTING OUT THE VOTE FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS WILL OPERATE FOR THE REFERENDUM. WITH THE SPLIT ON THE LABOR SIDE, CONSERVATIVES BELIEVE SIMILAR LABOR TECHNIQUES USED IN GENERAL ELECTIONS WILL NOT BE OPERATIVE, AND THIS MAY RESTRICT THE ANTI-VOTE. THIS POINT WAS GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED IN BBC/TV MID WEEK PROGRAM MAY 29 WHICH FEATURED FULL-TIME AGENTS OF LABOR, CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PARTIES IN COVENTRY AREA CANVASSING TOGETHER FOR PRO-MARKET CAUSE.

10. THUS, LESS THAN A WEEK BEFORE THE REFERENDUM, STRENUOUS EFFORTS ARE BEING EXERTED AND SOMETIMES OF A

CIRCUSY NATURE TO INJECT A LITTLE VITALITY INTO THE CAMPAIGN. FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN STIMULATING THE ELECTORATE TO VOTE, HOWEVER, THESE EFFORTS TO DATE HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED IN INTERRUPTING THE FLOW OF ARGUMENTATION, RHETORIC AND MIND-BOGGLING MANIPULATION OF STATISTICS. EDUCATING THE MASSES ON SOME OF THE COMPLICATED FACTORS INVOLVED CANNOT BE A REWARDING EXPERIENCE FOR THE POLITICIANS INVOLVED. MUCH MORE INTERESTING IS THE BASIC QUESTION OF THE SPLIT IN THE LABOR PARTY, WHICH THE
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REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN HAS STIMULATED, AND PUBLIC EXPOSURE OF VARIOUS STRAINS OF AGREEMENT INVOLVING MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT PARTIES. WHETHER SWEETNESS AND LIGHT, ALONG WITH UNITY AND COHESION, WILL RETURN AFTER JUNE 5 REMAINS MUCH MORE INTERESTING THAN PRICE COMPARISONS IN PENCE, FRANCS AND KRONER.

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